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Decalogue is wholly lacking in any legislation embodying the great dominant ideas of Amos and Hosea, *e. g.*, against oppression of the poor, and in behalf of mercy. The ordinary interpretation of the tenth commandment as *fundamentally* ethical is wrong. Hebrew ethics at no period concerned itself with inclinations and desires, but only with acts. The word *covet* here means "to take possession of something that is occupied," the old Semitic idea being that anything that was unoccupied was free for anybody to take possession of. The third commandment is a prohibition against calling in divine aid to do injury to fellow Israelites. The sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth are also to be limited in operation to fellow-countrymen—foreigners stood on an entirely different plane in the eyes of the moral law.

A code of this character was exactly suited to the circumstances attending the covenant at Sinai. This must be thought of, not as a covenant between Yahweh and Israel, but as a union of several related tribes for self-defense and mutual assistance. As protector of this union Yahweh was called in—the God to whom some of the tribes, at least, ascribed their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The necessity of enlarging the scope of the moral law, so as to make it extend beyond the borders of the individual tribe far enough to include all the members of the new union, gave rise to the code now known as "the Decalogue."

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#### **Are Christian Scholars Open-Minded?**

In the *Hibbert Journal* for January is an article by Mr. C. G. Montefiore, of England, which he entitles "Jewish Scholarship and Christian Silence." He as a Jewish scholar has the very serious charge to make against Christian scholars of all countries, but particularly of Germany, that they utterly disregard the best work which is done by Jewish scholars in the study of the New Testament history. And the reason which he alleges for this inexcusable ignorance or ignoring of the work of Jewish scholars is that Christian scholars have already made up their minds concerning certain fundamental facts of New Testament history and are no longer open to a change of view, no matter how good may be the evidence adduced for a different understanding of that history. These Christian scholars, he holds, believe that the Law produced a low, unspiritual religion; that the rabbis taught a bad and chaffering morality; that they knew nothing of communion with God; that God was their Master, but not their Father;

that he was distant and unapproachable; that all they hoped and cared for was material reward; that their law was a bondage; that it prompted to sin; that unchastity, neglect of parents, and other crimes flourished under their régime; that the poor hated them; and that in their scheme of salvation it was only the rich and well-to-do who would inherit the kingdom of heaven (and a gross, material "heaven" at that). Now Mr. Montefiore believes that this idea of the Pharisees, scribes, and rabbis of the first Christian century is fundamentally false, and that it has been shown to be false by evidence which to any open mind would carry conviction. The particular Jewish scholar who has proved it false is in his judgment Dr. Schechter, formerly of Cambridge University, now the head of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York city. His elaborate studies in the Talmud have made him the foremost scholar in dealing with the problems of Jewish theology and Jewish history at the time of Christ; and the particular series of articles (seven in all) which ought, in Mr. Montefiore's opinion, to have converted all Christian scholars to a radically different interpretation of Judaism in the first century, was published in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* between 1894 and 1900.

The sincerity and the dignity of this appeal from one of England's best-known and ablest Jewish scholars ought to lead all students of the Bible to renewed and open-minded consideration of the points involved. It may be that Mr. Montefiore is right; if so, it means the entire reconstruction of our interpretation of Judaism in Jesus' day. That such a reconstruction is required, that the Pharisees, scribes, and rabbis were so entirely different from what Christian scholars now suppose, is hard indeed to believe. But in any case Christian scholars must not and will not ignore the scholarly work of anyone, and the Jewish scholars are certainly entitled to recognition by Christian interpreters of the New Testament. If Dr. Schechter is wrong, it must be possible to show it from the evidence.